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Senate Committee Rejects Appointment of Dorothy Jones to State Board of Canvassers

Sikkema says first rejection in 15 years is significant but justified

Lansing - Citing a violation of her oath of office, the Senate Government Operations Committee today rejected the reappointment of Dorothy Jones to the State Board of Canvassers. It is the first rejection of a Michigan gubernatorial appointment in 15 years.

"The rejection of a gubernatorial appointment is a significant action, but I believe that the circumstances surrounding Ms. Jones' reappointment justify this step," said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, chairman of the committee.

The rejection was based upon Ms. Jones' handling of two issues in August 2004: the Citizens for the Protection of Marriage constitutional amendment and the Ralph Nader for President petitions.

"Ms. Jones' actions on the amendment and the petitions breached her oath of office and her duties as a member of the State Board of Canvassers," said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. "She ignored opinions of legal counsel and secretary of state staff at the meeting. She attempted to disenfranchise the constitutional right of hundreds of thousands of Michigan citizens to place issues of importance to them on the ballot."

Sikkema also noted that the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled the State Board of Canvassers breached its "clear legal duty to certify the petition" because it was in proper form and had sufficient signatures. The Court of Appeals went on to state that it had no confidence the members who voted against the proposal would have a "sudden change of heart" and faithfully do what the law requires.

Numerous newspaper editorials statewide also took the Board of Canvassers to task for its actions. Among them were the Lansing State Journal, the Saginaw News, the Flint Journal and the Detroit News.

The Flint Journal wrote, "Recent action by the Board of Canvassers is an appalling slap in the face to Michigan voters." The Detroit News wrote that the actions of the board "cheat Michigan voters of their democratic choice."

The Lansing State Journal said the Board of Canvassers "creatively redefined their constitutional role," and the Saginaw News summed up the issue with the headline: "Gay marriage: Let voters vote."

The committee's recommendation will now go the full Senate, where a vote is expected to take place on Thursday.

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